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Of Modern Poetry

A high school boy out West recently told his father at the supper table that his teacher had been reading parts of an essay on poetry by a man named Arnold.

"What did she say about poetry?" the father asked.

"All I can remember is, 'The future of poetry is a mess,'" the boy replied.

"I don't know about the future," the father said, "but I think that hits off the present very well."

The father's attitude may sound harsh but I venture to say that his feeling is well nigh universal in America today. When the Pulitzer Prizes were announced over the radio last Tuesday I noted that the radio announcers did not think the prize for poetry important enough to deserve mention.

On a recent alumni junket for the college I questioned business men, lawyers and doctors on the subject of present day verse, and they almost invariably said, "I never read the stuff." A few told me they tried to read it, became confused, and gave it up. I heard three women gushing over the beauties of the poetry of W. H. Auden a while ago, and in preparation for this paper (and to the disgust of my wife) I asked the ladies what individual poems of Auden they enjoyed especially. Two of them could not name one poem of Auden's they liked and the third named *The Orators* but refused to be pushed into a discussion of its substance. We have come to the place where explanatory notes, manuals and treatises are required to teach such a comparatively short poem as *The Waste Land*. The climax of modern poetry was reached last year when Ezra Pound's disciples awarded him $1,000 in prize money for the composition of *The Pisan Cantos*—a work which only one teacher of literature in a thousand can decipher. The acme of this type of poetry comes from the admonition of Wallace Stevens to keep away from subjects, the admonition which says,

> Poetry is the subject of the poem,
> From this the poem issues and
> To this returns.

One must, in other words, avoid subjects. This attempt at pure effusion in poetry has always been interesting as a part of Poetry's side-show. But we have now come to the place where it is not the side-show but the main tent. And to this tent people will not go. They are too much bored with what is going on inside.

I think the origin of the movement came from Ezra Pound's admiration of Robert Browning's *Sordello*. In a moment of exasperation Pound writes, "Hang it. there is only one *Sordello*." in his prose Pound once pointed out that the Sordello motive should point the direction of modern poetry. Disgusted with his own country and all she stood for, Pound fled into exile. Our civilization to him was deplorable. At first in London and Paris and later in Italy, he revelled in his relief from our world of Joe Goulds and George Babbitts. But he was a teacher from first to last and could not free himself from the profession. As a teacher he had to tell us all about our weaknesses and deficiencies. He made little headway, and grew increasingly exasperated. Finally he denounced us as well as renounced us and became a propagandist for Mussolini. The ivory tower in a foreign land is not a happy abode for an American exile. (Even Henry James felt he had made a mistake and urged Amy Lowell to avoid his error.) Pound's frustration became greater and greater. He took it out in his cantos. Maledictions and indecent expressions are the marks of an exasperated and frustrated man. At the close of the first World War we were all frustrated and Pound's *Mauberley* gave an arresting expression to our feeling. Young men who are naturally on the lookout for something new and experimental gathered around this exile, and fell under the spell of his personality. One disciple, T. S. Eliot, proved a more resourceful poet, a better performer, and became the Elisha to Pound's Elijah. Others followed, and soon we had a group of poets writing poems for each other. They seemed to enjoy their exclusiveness. Literary snobbery is perhaps the worst of all snobberies for it shuts out young people who are eager for knowledge that comes to us through the entrance of poetry. I have seen young men struggling with the poetry in *The Kenyon Review* and *The Tiger's Eye* shake their heads and go away sorrowful. Through the influence of Pound and Eliot, aided and abetted by MacLeish and a half dozen others, this Sordello-Canto-Waste Land party line became the line for poetry to follow. In my opinion this central core of our modern poetry has shrunk the stream of American verse, and I feel like crying out, "Return Alpheus, return Sicilian muse."

By mere chance I discovered the other day in an obscure journal a prose essay on the baroque poets of 17th Century Spain. It was written by one Antonio Machado, a modern Spanish poet and essayist, and says so well what I feel about these precious poets that I will let him speak for me.

> "The literary baroque is characterized by poverty of intuition. It lacks external experience, direct contact with the tangible world. It lacks internal experience, contact with the human spirit in its momentary and fleeting states of individual consciousness. It fails to confront ideas. essentials, values, as objects of mental vision. The images of baroque poetry express, elaborate or adorn concepts, but they contain no flashes of intuition, no living interrelationships. With its images one can lecture or reason, but poetry should sing. The use of images, however striking, can never transform a logical function, an operation of the reason, into one necessarily aesthetic, a play of emotions. . . .
>
> "Really creative art never turns its back on nature, and by nature I mean all parts of life and of the earth that have not yet been transformed into art, including; obviously, the mind and soul of the poet himself. To create, an artist must transform some part of this raw material into a work of art. Obviously, this cannot be done with material that has been transformed already. It is true that there exists a form of aesthetic apathy which undertakes to find its material in the work of past artists rather than in nature, and insists that one can be creative merely by rearranging it. This is as if bees should spend their working-hours gathering honey from the comb at one side of the hive and carrying it to the comb on the opposite side, instead of going out and gathering it from flowers. True, they deal in honey, the same as the older-fashioned bees did, but whose? and to what purpose?
>
> "Baroque poetry, with its

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ANNUAL MEETING

Stanford University, California, Tuesday, September 6, 1949

Education Auditorium, 8:00 P. M.

THE 'NEW CRITICISM' AND THE ENGLISH TEACHER

Mark Schorer, University of California
"A general statement, with some ancillary remarks about the diffusion of what is called the 'new criticism' into many areas beyond that wholly hypothetical 'cult' which seems to haunt to many minds."

Arnold Stein, University of Washington
"Comment as a teacher and writer who practices these aims and methods in undergraduate teaching, and an estimate of success."

Pearce Young, Graduate Student, Stanford University, and student at the Kenyon School of English.
"The receiving end and what it is like."

N. B. After each member of the panel has presented his views, the audience will be invited to question the speakers and to comment.

All teachers of undergraduate English are welcome at this meeting.

The Association's Appointment Bureau will be open September 7, 8, and 9 in Rooms 54 and 55, near the MLA registration desk.

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The Drive To Produce

C.E.A. members have often said it. But hear E. M. W. Tillyard, Master of Jesus College Cambridge, in the Summer Issue of the *Yale Review*, via *The Pleasures of Publishing*.

After discussing the arguments invoked to support "superflous erudition," Tillyard points out that it also derives strength "from a motive that covers much more than the province of learning. Aud this is the drive to produce. It has been noticed as one of the sinister facts of the modern world that the sheer urge to produce is habitually put above human needs as a motive force. . . .

"This publication for publication's sake," he continues, "or more often for procuring-a-better-job's sake, is a very serious matter indeed, leading to a monstrous inflation of print and apt to bring all learning into disrepute. . . . I advance the remedial principle that for academic appointment and promotion nothing beyond efficiency or eminence as a teacher is required. In actual fact, most efficient or eminent teachers will want to do some writing, and are likely to suffer in efficiency if they do not indulge this want. . . .

"Think of the case of Epictetus. He was a professor of philosophy in the ancient world, and he lectured but never published. . . It is a sobering thought that Epictetus would have lost his job today in the University—well, I had better leave it to you to supply, as you think fit, the missing word or words.

"It is of vital importance that electors to academic posts, when, as they properly should, they review published work of candidates, give weight to quality and not quantity. That sense of assurance given to electing bodies by so many square yards of print is a terrible snare. There is the constant danger of weight being equated with bulk and of a facade of learning gaining it over inner intelligence. . . .

"Now, it is easier to write obscurely and at length than clearly and briefly. And as long as sheer bulk helps towards academic promotion, research workers will be little drawn to the better and more difficult course. The result is that many books or articles have neglected or disclaimed the elementary obligation of the author to consult the interest of the reader, to perform that social act of grace and intelligibility that no writer of the eighteenth century ever dreamed you could omit. It seems to me a terrible thing that research work that purports to be humane and to deal with matters of culture should by its manner of writing flout the very things it professes to promote. . ."

Of Modern Poetry

(Continued from Page 1)

frigid vehemence, its exhibitionistic forcefulness and false dynamism, its arbitrary twistings and distortions, its carefully-arranged denaturalizing of living speech into a dead language, its strained mannerisms and calculated artificialities, can, in a period of exhaustion or perversion of taste, produce an effect superficially resembling aesthetic emotion. What it can never attain to is grace. Grace can come only when an art achieves complete forgetfulness of itself, of its means and techniques and methods, and this can happen only in the hands of a great artist. . ."

The subject matter in the poetry of this dreary crew, moreover, is too often one of blank negation. All too often they assert that

"The pillared firmament is rottenness
And earth's base built on stubble."

We humans are too often represented as "the hollow men", or as "the animals Christ died for," or other such unsavory vermin. The idea of "upholding the flag of the world" as Chesterton says of Shakespeare, is foreign to the tribe. They never seem to experience Miranda's feeling

"O wonder
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is!
O brave new world,
That has such people in 't."

They frequently reserve their special maledictions for their own native land. One looks upon our country as "a perishing republic" . . . "settling in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire". Another becomes a spokesman for the Fascist corporate state, and rants like a saturnine ward-heeler over the short waves against the U.S.A. Another writes a volume satirizing, albeit with occasional good humor, all we have, all we are and all we stand for. And a fourth informs us that he has renounced his American citizenship and has become a political royalist. In the light of our super-human achievement in World War II — an Homeric adventure in human history, if ever there was one — all this damnation and detestation of our native land strikes a strange note — or would strike a strange note if people could decipher and understand the text. As it is they shake their heads and give poetry over to the effete and the elite. The negative quality in the subject matter of this verse, when indeed there is any, often generates a dead-weight heaviness and an exhausting vacuity in the rhythm and cadence of the verse itself. The two are more nearly related than some of us ever suspected.

One can see it best, perhaps, when he watches the effect on the audience of such poets as Robert Frost and Vachel Lindsay in contrast to the effect on the audience of two of the recent disciples of the tribe of Ezra. After a recital by Lindsay we went away feeling that we could hear Immanuel singing. After a recital by Frost we come away with a deeper love for this New England landscape. "We are out for stars" determined to find our place among all infinities. But after a recital of one of the tribe of Ezra we applaud politely, if at all, and go out the same door wherein we went unstirred and unexcited. Some of us were nurtured on the idea that the poet was like the shepherd of King Admetus whom James Russell Lowell characterized thus:

"And after he was dead and gone.
And even his memory dim
Earth seemed more sweet to live upon
More full of love because of him."

The world needs this type of poet as never before. The world cries out for the bread of vital life-engendering poetry and we give it a stone — a mill stone to hang around its neck.

Of course, no one can make generalizations about a school of poetry that are fool-proof. Some good poetry is always being written regardless of the fashion. A. E. Housman has wisely said that English poetry during the past 300 years has been twice on the right track and twice on the wrong track. But he added that whether on the right or the wrong track some good poetry was always being written. However some of us may feel about the ivory-towered exclusiveness of the dominant wing of today's poetry, we must in all honesty, acknowledge that some fine work is being done. (A beautiful lady is beautiful whatever the style of dress imposed upon her by her age.) We deplore the shrinking of the area assigned to poetry. We deplore the infusion of pedantry in much of it — an infusion indicated, for example, by a multiplicity of languages. We deplore its too frequent tortured obscurities. We deplore the peevish cynicism of its attitude toward this broad land of ours, especially at the moment when we are compelled to take over world leadership. Poetry was made for nobler ends. It should open doors into the house of life. It should restore man's faith in himself and his species. It should unchain the heavy weight of heavy hours and light new sparks in the ashes of mankind.

Wilbert Snow
Wesleyan University

Scholar Into Critic?

Theory of Literature, Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Harcourt Brace, N. Y., 1949.

Although this book is not specifically addressed to college teachers of English, they can ignore it only at their own peril. Directed to potential scholars (graduate students) and practising scholars and critics, it surveys the major changes in the directions of European and American literary scholarship in the past 25 years, and then offers a program for the substantial re-direction of literary studies on the basis of those changes. In other words, it informs the teacher of English that his field of study has been basically altered in the past quarter century, and implies that his future colleagues are likely to be experts in this new field.

Theory of Literature (the book is badly named: it is not really about either theory or literature as such; it is about the *study* of literature) presents a mass of accomplished facts in the field of recent literary study; by advocating certain directions in literary study, the book itself may very well become history-making.

The ideas in this book are highly controversial. It is important

that they be known, thoroughly discussed, and their consequences foreseen. It is no secret to any English teacher that graduate study and scholarship in this country have often seemed futile and unrealistic. The question is, whether Messrs. Wellek and Warren have found the way out of an impasse; or whether they are leading us into another closed circle. Now is the time to take a stand, before the issues are settled.

This is an effort to report briefly on the ideas and directions of the proposals put forward in *Theory of Literature*. Perhaps it is well to say in advance that this one college English teacher heartily approves of several of their central, major proposals. But there are certain limitations of the program set forth by Messrs. Wellek and Warren which seem extremely damaging to the whole cause of the humanities.

Put compactly, and not unfairly I trust, the thesis of this book is that the literary scholar should be also a literary critic. This condition, the authors assert, does not now generally prevail. And the chief fault is with the graduate schools. Messrs. Wellek and Warren believe that the graduate schools should train genuine literary critics; and the aim of these scholar-critics should be to achieve a radically new history of universal literature. *Theory of Literature* provides a compendious, and extremely valuable survey of world scholarly criticism, pointing out what is antiquated, and what directed toward this new literary history. But as the authors of this book see it, the major part of the task on a new history remains yet to be done. Thus they offer a new aim and task for scholarly study in literature.

The new scholar-critic must not be a moralistic critic, like Arnold, nor a sociological critic, like Taine, nor an intuitive critic, like Croce. He must be objective, intellectual, and accept the autonomy of literary art. He must "evaluate" works of literary art strictly from within the field of literary aesthetic. In short, the new scholar-critic must be a subscriber to the New Criticism. The authors thus propose to revitalize the study of literature by placing the New Criticism in the central position in the graduate school.

The New Criticism is now some 25 years old. That means it has fully come of age. Its tenets, its achievements, even its own history in the narrow sense of a movement, were available to us, even before Messrs. Wellek and Warren brought up their vast supporting evidence. A whole generation of English and American literary students and teachers have lived with the New Criticism as the advance-guard of literary study. To older members of the profession, it may be well to recall that this New Criticism is not the "New Criticism" of J. E. Spingarn. To the best of my knowledge, the name "New" was given to the movement here being considered by John Crowe Ransom in his book, *The New Criticism*, 1941.

The New Criticism dates from immediately after World War I, with the critical essays of T. S. Eliot. It was taken up and extended by I. A. Richards at Cambridge. There was an intimate association between the New Criticism and the New Poetry from the start. Not only was Eliot a leader in both; Richards' first independent book, *The Principles of Literary Criticism*, contains an appendix on the poetry of Eliot which reveals that Richards' principles were in part at least designed to cope with Eliot's poetry. In the United States, the great home of the New Criticism has, of course, been the intellectual literary magazines: *The Southern Review*, *The Sewanee*, particularly *The Kenyon Review*, and to some extent, *The Partisan Review*. The movement here has now been buttressed by a whole shelf of books by Tate, Ransom, Cleanth Brooks, Winters, Blackmur, and others. Probably the greatest triumphs of the New Criticism are to be seen in the works of I. A. Richards, and especially in the brilliant specific analyses of William Empson. No serious student of English literature can have remained untouched by the work of Richards and Empson.

The New Criticism came directly into the lives of English teachers, as teachers, with the volume of Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry*. And through this volume, the New Criticism has had its direct effect on college students and even prep school students for nearly a decade. With *Theory of Literature*, as already indicated, it is proposed to move the New Criticism into the graduate school.

By 1941, J. C. Ransom could write: "In depth and precision at once it (The New Criticism) is beyond all earlier criticism, and it has already some unity of method."

In practice, the New Criticism has been chiefly concerned with poetry, though its methods and theory extend also to other forms of imaginative literature. It starts with the basic statement: poetry is not a prose statement, embellished with rhetoric; rather, poetry is a unique arrangement of words, all essential to the texture and structure of the poem. The poem, in fact, is this texture and structure. The New Criticism, therefore, is devoted almost exclusively to a close scrutiny and analysis of the texture and structure of specific poems. Here is its great and undoubted value, and here it has scored its major triumphs.

In this close scrutiny, often word by word, and usually line by line, the New Criticism pays attention to exact and multiple meanings of words; to denotations and connotations; to ambiguity (Empson); to wit and paradox (Brooks); to irony; to metaphor and imagery and symbolism; to subsidiary groupings of material; and usually, though not always, to the arrangement and structure of the whole material. These factors are the principal components, the very substance of poetry, for this criticism.

Needless to say, simply following the analysis of a poem involves concentrated, intellectual exercise for many readers. (And it is notable that the analysis always proves to be far longer than the original poem.) Presumably this intellectual exercise involves emotions—shock and surprise, at least. Empson, for one, says that the process of analysis of poetry, usually more or less conscious, *is* the poetic experience, poetry itself. And he finds it highly exciting.

The ideal would seem to be that the New Criticism should make every reader of poetry a New Critic himself. Doubtless all readers of the New Criticism have learned to scrutinize the texture and structure of all literature more carefully than they ever did before. But the New Critics are not content to leave this process to the reader. They continue, as in *The Well-Wrought Urn*, to do the analysis for him. Incidentally, how much room such an analysis leaves for controversy is well-illustrated by this book.

The New Criticism, at least so far, has operated most successfully on short poems. And it has already established new valuations. Of course, poems which come off well in this process, go up in the scale; others, down. Seventeenth-century literature, especially the metaphysicals like Donne, Cowley, and Marvel, has been exalted to new heights. The status of Milton (he wrote some rather long poems), however, remains as yet hanging in the balance. Dryden and Pope yield satisfactory results. Of the romantics, Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley fare badly. Really only Blake and Keats survive. Browning and Arnold, of course, are pushed further down hill. The real darlings become Hopkins, Eliot, Yeats, Auden, and their younger followers on both sides of the Atlantic. (As has been remarked, often the New Critics and the New Poets coincide—a fact which has aroused the suspicions of certain opponents of the New Criticism.)

Whereven we may ultimately place the New Criticism, for its analysis, its deepening of the approach to literature, every English teacher must be grateful. It deserves his thanks and applause.

But now let us look at the cost, the expense of this achievement. To do so, we need to glance at the theory of the New Criticism more acutely.

Richards and Ransom have been the two most explicit theorists. Richards started with Coleridge. The objective of poetry is pleasure. Early in his career, Richards, noting the diverse appeals in poetry, elaborated the psychological theory of poetry, arriving at the conclusion that poetry harmonizes the appetencies. "When they have adjusted themselves to one another and become organized into a coherent whole, the needs concerned may be satisfied." Later, he expressed his position more fully: "Words are the meeting points at which regions of experience which can never combine in sensation or intuition, come together. They are the occasion and means of that growth which is the mind's endless endeavor to order itself." (Tate thinks the latter statement repudiates the former; rather, I should think it simply extends Richards' earlier statement.) For the New Critics, therefore, a poem becomes a kind of synthetic experience, unique, a thing in itself. And its aim is contemplation —not action.

The New Critics are thus greatly concerned to assert and defend the autonomy (or integrity) of poetry (and all imaginative literature). Hence, they are led to attack all matters and concerns which seem to them extraneous in the consideration of pure literature.

Thus, literature is *not* imitation, or representation. Realism, truth-to-life, scientific truth, are all extraneous, non-literary concerns. Or again, mere ideas, or philosophy, or especially logic, are not true literary concerns, cannot form a basis for literary judgement. Poetry is not dependent on profundity; especially, it is not watered-down philosophy.

Further, literature is not a branch of biography. It is not a study of an author's mind; it is not to be judged as self-expression; "sincerity" in literature has no meaning; literature is not psychology at all; at least, literature is not to be approached through the author's psychology. The matter of the author's intention is quite beside the point. The poem, the play, the novel, is the thing.

Nor is it a document of social significance. Neither the social origin nor the social direction of literature is of prime concern in the analysis or evaluation of literature. Neither is literature to be confused with history, to be taken as a historical document, or judged merely on historical grounds. The value of traditional scholarship, except that of the history of language, is highly suspect in the eyes of the New Criticism.

Special strictures are leveled by Ransom against the concern with the ethical or moral elements of literature. "Mr. Yvor Winters (whom Ransom approves on other grounds) is a victim of the moralistic illusion," he writes. "If mathematics is for mathematical interest, why is not poetry for poetic interest?" Ransom asks.

Didactism, and propaganda, as possible values of literature are above all to be excluded. The true elements are not directed toward action at all; literature remains unique, a separate experience in itself, to be judged by and within itself.

Having arrived at this point, the investigator of the New Criticism may well ask if these critics are not in danger of boxing literature off into a kind of self-contained isolation ward. It is possible to honor, respect, and even approve the achievements of the New Criticism, and yet at the same time to wonder if all this has not been achieved at too great a cost to the whole field and role of literature in actual life.

With this summary treatment of the New Criticism before us, we may now return to *Theory of Literature*. Wellek and Warren have set the New Criticism in a much wider and firmer framework than ever before, and also given it a more significant role. Perhaps it is well to note that these authors do not use Ransom's term "New Criticism." In their approach to individual works, they prefer the term "Formalism;" in the survey of many works they seem to prefer "Perspectivism."

THIS GENERATION

Anderson - Walton

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Theory of Literature opens with five chapters devoted to succinct statements on the idea of literary study, the nature and function of literature, and the ideas of literary criticism and literary history. The authors say that sympathetic understanding and enjoyment of literature are pre-conditions of the study of literature. "But they are only pre-conditions." (Rather large pre-conditions to take for granted ed, we might say.) The process of literary study is that of translating the experience of literature into intellectual terms. The aim is to define the essence of each individual work or author; and in the case of larger groups of literary work, to explain the common essence of them as literature. For all this, systematic method is required.

Literature is defined by, and limited to, imaginative works; it stresses the connotative as opposed to the denotative use of language. It is complex and analysis must show its several strata. Literature must not be confused with the world of objective reality; nor does literature lead to direct action in that world. As to the function of literature, the authors will accept the "dulce et utile" dictum of Horace—properly interpreted. This means for them that the aim of literature is purely aesthetic, "Non-acquisitive contemplation." "Its prime and chief function is fidelity to its own nature."

The chapter entitled "Literary Theory, Criticism and History" scarcely does justice to its topic. Distinctions are drawn between literary theory (study of principles) and literary criticism (interpretation and evaluation of specific literary examples), and literary history. Their approach to the latter they call "Perspectivism." " 'Perspectivism' means that we recognize that there is one poetry, one literature, comparable in all ages, developing, changing, full of possibilities." "The term 'theory of literature' might well include - as this book does - the necessary 'theory of literary criticism' and 'theory of literary history.' " Chapter V presents a fine plea for the study of universal literature - from the earliest to the most contemporary examples.

Chapter VI, "Ordering and Establishing Evidence," is a resume, and attack on, the inadequacies of "traditional scholarship." The chapter is devoted principally to a discussion of the problems of editing texts: establishing text, authenticity, canon, chronology, annotation. "The questions discussed in this chapter are practically the only questions to which existent textbooks of methods . . . are devoted, and they are almost the only methods in which American graduate schools provide any kind of systematic training."

The next 13 chapters of *Theory of Literature* are divided into two major sections, and this grouping of material into these sections, and classifications of sections, are of vital significance to the thesis of the book. The first section is headed: "The *Extrinsic* Approach to Literature." Under this heading, the authors discuss the relation of literature, respectively, to biography, psychology, society, ideas, and other arts. The significance of the classification of these fields as *extrinsic* in the study of literature can scarcely be over-emphasized. These approaches are regarded as more enlightening in the study of literature than the wholly external "factual" matter of traditional scholarship, yet not so essential as the "intrinsic" approaches to be discussed later. It is certainly vital to assert the autonomy, integrity of literature, as against biography, psychology, and philosophy. In fact, it is to be wished that the authors had marked off the significance of literature against these other pursuits even more clearly and forcefully than they actually do here.

On literature and biography they say: "No biographical evidence can change or influence critical evaluation. The frequently adduced criterion of 'sincerity' is thoroughly false if it judges literature in terms of biographical truthfulness." Of psychology, they say, "These books (great novels) are not primarily psychological studies or expositions of theories, but dramas or melodramas, where striking situations are more important than realistic psychological motivation." Of literature and society: "Literature is no substitute for sociology or politics. It has its own justification and aim." And finally, this on literature and ideas: "Instead of speculating on such large-scale problems of the philosophy of history and the ultimate integral of civilization, the literary student should turn his attention to the concrete problem not yet solved or even adequately discussed: the question of how ideas actually enter into literature. It is obviously not a question of ideas in a work of literature as long as these ideas remain mere raw material, mere information. The question arises only when and if these ideas are actually incorporated into the very texture of the work of art, when they become "constructive," in short, when they cease to be ideas in the ordinary sense of concepts and become symbols, or even myths." "Must not we conclude that 'Philosophical truth' as such has no artistic value as such? Philosophy, ideological content, in its proper context, seems to enhance artistic value because it corroborates several important artistic values: those of complexity and coherence." To conclude: "The reduction of a work of art to a doctrinal statement is disastrous to understanding the uniqueness of a work: it disintegrates its structure and imposes alien criteria of value." Here is a strong position, indeed. If it is accepted, it will sweep away at least three-fourths of all the "literary criticism" now extant!

From the "extrinsic" approaches, *Theory of Literature* moves to the "Intrinsic Approaches to Literature." The chapter headings here include: "The Analysis of the Literary Work of Art; Euphony, Rhythm, and Meter: Style and Stylistics; Image, Metaphor, Symbol, Myth; Modes of Narrative Fiction; Literary Genres; Evaluation; Literary History." Within these chapters lie the real substance and method of literary study for the authors of *Theory of Literature*. It will be possible here to indicate only a few salient points. (Throughout the book, as previously indicated, the authors bring up a wealth of material from Continental criticism, particularly German and Russian, which may well constitute a major contribution of this book to scholarship in this country.)

In the "intrinsic" approach to literature, Wellek and Warren insist that the scholar-critic must start with the work of literature itself. Most traditional scholars, they believe, are simply helpless when they are brought up against a specific work and asked to

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analyze and evaluate it, qua work of art. The literary work is a structure of signs, or norms, for aesthetic purposes. The student must scrutinize these signs, and trace their pattern of relationships—the texture and the structure which compose the work of art. The authors refer with approval to the Polish philosopher Ingarden, and his "highly technical analysis of the literary work of art." For him, the literary work is a series of strata: sound, meaning, objects represented, point of view, and metaphysical qualities. Each must be traced, and all must form a coherent structure.

Later, however, Wellek and Warren turn to the cardinal elements of poetry commonly stressed by the New Criticism. In the chapter headed, "Image, Metaphor, Symbol, Myth," they write: "When . . we identify the 'meaning' of a poem with its whole complex of structures, we then encounter, as central poetic structure, the sequence represented by the four terms of our title." Each of these elements is vital when it appears as a part of the texture (not a mere decoration) and as it builds up the structure as a whole. I should like simply to interpolate the fact that I deplore this emphasis on "myth" in literature, here and elsewhere. It seems to me a most unfortunate and mistaken emphasis in the study of literature.

In discussing the novel, these authors say: "The novelist offers less a case—a character or event—than a world. The great novelists all have such a world—recognizable as overlapping the empirical world but distinct in its self-coherent intelligibility." "This world or *Kosmos* of a novelist—this pattern or structure or organism, which includes plot, characters, setting, world-view, 'tone'—is what we must scrutinize when we attempt to compare a novel with life or to judge, ethically or socially, a novelist's work."

And now finally we come to "Evaluation," the climax (and perhaps most controversial portion) of the book. "Men ought to value literature for being what it is; they ought to evaluate it in terms and in designs of its literary value." If that sounds like reasoning in a circle, the authors are prepared to accept the charge. "What literature is, by modern (sic) definition, 'pure of' is practical intent (propaganda, incitation to direct, immediate action) and scientific intent (provision of information, facts, 'additions to knowledge')." "The work of literature is an aesthetic object, capable of arousing aesthetic experience."

"Can we evaluate a literary work entirely upon aesthetic criteria, or do we need, as T. S. Eliot suggests, to judge the literariness of literature by aesthetic criteria and the greatness of literature by extra-aesthetic criteria?" They answer, the second criteria are definitely extraneous. "Our criterion is inclusiveness, 'imaginative integration,' and amount and diversity of material integrated." "The tighter the organization of the poem, the higher its value, according to formalistic criticism."

"Let us reply to Eliot that the maturity of a work of art is its inclusiveness, its awareness, its ironies and tensions." Here, of course, it is obvious that the authors are being forced to introduce some of the very "extra-aesthetic criteria" which Eliot had in mind, when he spoke of them as a necessary second part of the ultimate "literary" judgment.

Aware of the dangers of confining themselves to too narrowly an aesthetic position, the authors now seem to find themselves on the defensive, in accepting the consequences of their own argument. "In a sense, the whole issue in aesthetics might be said to lie between the view which asserts the existance of a separate, irreducable 'aesthetic experience' (an autonomous realm of art) and that which makes the art instrumental to science and society, which denies such a *tertium quid* as the 'aesthetic value.'" I do not think the authors put the alternatives fairly here. We may regard literature as unique, and yet as instrumental—not to science and society—but to the spirit of man and the good life.

They outline the case for certain "enthusiasts" of the arts, apparently with disapproval. These "may find the value of the arts (particularly literature) precisely in their inclusiveness. For writers and critics .this is a more grandiose claim to make than the claim of expertness at the construction or interpretation of literary works of art. It gives the 'literary mind' a final 'prophetic' authority. possession of a distinctive 'truth' wider and deeper than the truths of science and philosophy. But these grandiose claims are by their very grandiosity difficult to defend." I should not, personally, care to state my own belief in the significance of literature in exactly these words. But if I did not consider literature of vital, irreplaceable worth in the life and affairs of men, I should not be devoting my own life to it. It is only because I do believe in its first rate importance that I can urge other men and women to devote their lives to it. I should think an English teacher who did not hold .his view would be something less than fully effective in his role.

The penultimate chapter pleads for the grand objective of a new history of world literature on the principles and methods set forth in this book. It is certainly a desirable end. The tendency of all the New Critics has been to take literature in snippets. These authors believe such a universal history is possible. And as an objective, it provides a distant goal, a rallying point, for the new scholar-critics.

The concluding chapter, "The Study of Literature in the Graduate Schools," has been previously printed. I trust that those in position of responsibility in American graduate schools have taken due notice of the many excellent suggestions offered for the re-vitalization of graduate study and teaching in this country. For our purpose here, it is sufficient to notice that the authors appeal for the final synthesis of scholarship and criticism. They ask that courses in theory and method of criticism be required in graduate schools. Not only should scholars be critics. but teachers be theoreticians. they should be able to *analyze* literature with their classes.

A study of *Theory of Literature* makes it apparent thaat Messrs. Wellek and Warren are strong forces in the process of shaking up, and re-directing the study of literature in America. For that, nearly all teachers of English will applaud them. But I do not believe their program is broad enough, or "humane" enough for the task ahead. The criticism of literature they outline is a new, sharper tool for scholarship; it should have been adopted long ago. Yet it is only one more, basic, preliminary approach—like the older scholarship in this respect—to the ultimate judgement and effectiveness of literature. It would be tragic to exalt "formalistic" criticism as a pinnacle of new orthodoxy in the graduate school. If literature is simply an art which serves a narrow, self-contained aesthetic function, its study deserves to remain the exclusive province of a coterie.

But literature arises from human beings,—is built on genuine suffering, joy, and needs—and is addressed to human beings, as they exist, in the human situation. If it is to have any major place in that life, even if it is to be accepted as one of the "humanities" in the college curriculum, we must insist on a wider and firmer role for it in men's lives.

This is the twentieth century, the age of the surge of physical science and social science, of the disruption of mankind. What has literature to offer? The college teacher lives daily on the firing line. Every moment of the time he is facing his students, he must defend and exhibit the desireability and irreplaceable significance of literature in the lives of those young men and women. And if he only knew, the scholar or the scholar-critic, is on the firing line in the competitive world of men's interests today. Has the proponent of a new approach to literature nothing better to present than a cluster of signs, completely integrated,

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May I obtain extra copies of the Chap Book—"The Man of Letters and American Culture"? It seems to me that the philosophy it expresses is so essential . . . that each student should be asked to read and discuss it. . . .

This is a partial answer to A. H. Nethercot's question in the CRITIC of December, 1948. . . . Discussions like those in the new Chap Book and in "Heavens! He's Moral" and "What do YOU Think?" (Dec.,1948) are a powerful incentive to many of us to "go and do likewise,"—to the best of our limited ability.

O. C. Rupprecht
Concordia College

New England Meeting

May 7, University of Massachusetts, 250 present from 75 institutions. An interesting feature of this meeting was the large attendance from teachers' colleges, technical and professional schools, and junior colleges.

Wellek and Bernbaum

In the opening session, Rene Wellek, Yale, in "The Impasse of Literary History", maintained that there is immediate need for defining the term "literary history" so that anthologies and texts can be written which will actually clarify the period they endeavor to cover. It is not possible to judge a single poem, cut out of its matrix in time, fairly. Nor, on the other hand, will the usual list of books and dates to be learned by rote serve any useful purpose. Because so many recent texts have sinned at one extreme or the other, we have reached an impasse — an impasse that can be solved only by definition of the term *literature*. How much of science, how much of travel accounts, charms, government reports, anecdotes can be considered literature? True, the scholar and the teacher need know as much of this material as they can, but they need to know and to digest it before presenting it as literary history. Luxuriant adjectives are no substitute for critical standards and 'broad' sampling, no justification for the absence of a critical framework. Prof. Wellek concluded that both theory and practice needed to grow up, to mature before the term *literary history* can have as clear a meaning as it should.

In his *What Does the Nature of Literature Require of Its Interpreters?* Ernest Bernbaum, taking up a part of Professor Wellek's statement, maintained that it was easier to say what literature is not, than to say what it is. Claiming that literature is an art, and art has an independence of its own, with a fundamental interest in techniques, literature can go beyond science or philosophy in insight and prophecy. Thereby is its greatest value. It can contribute to give people a knowledge and a faith to overcome their apprehension. Since all of man's problems are not measurable ones — even perhaps those that are measurable are the les important ones — art and literature have their greatest force in suggesting answers. Literature intuits that the law of the universe is order and justice — and arrives at this premise by imagination and vision, not by logical proof. Thus, we can demand of literature that it present Personality, Imagination, Beauty or Emotion by the effect of style, and Timelessness (neither antiquarianly old nor fashionably young). Every piece of literature is required to present some new insight in the relationship between Man, Nature and God.

Prof. Wellek briefly questioned the prophetic aspects of literature, pointing out that this lay within the province of philosophy too, and that it could degenerate to mere trite 'inspirational" comment.

H. L. V.

At the luncheon meeting, with Prof. Frank Prentice Rand, Acting Dean of the School of Liberal Arts, University of Massachusetts, presiding, there were two speakers — Prof. Reginald Cook (Director, the Bread Loaf School), who spoke on *The Responsibility of the Teacher of Literature to the Humanities*, and Prof. Wilbert Snow (Wesleyan University), whose subject was *Of Modern Poetry*. (See p. 1, this issue)

Reginald Cook

Commenting on the drift of students from literature courses to the physical and social sciences, Prof. Cook acknowledged the economic priorities, but identified our basic challenge as failure to make the humanities more than "a series of grace notes in the modern technological symphony"— a failure to determine what in the humanities will nourish the student. The teacher must first of all know his students; they must be his major interest.

The end product of humanistic study, though characterized variously, is a man; and the speaker deplored the kind of teaching that divorces literature from life—the kind of graduate study that produces "Sherlock Holmes antiquarians, with a gentle, innocuous interest in the cultivation of the venerable." What discourages students, he pointed out, is the failure to find in their literary studies criteria by which they can with justice and discrimination criticize and judge this or any age. They see too often that their instructors are like the monks Lewis Mumford mentioned in *The Condition of Men*, who copied the old herbals in the scriptoriums of the monasteries, and in copying made their plants less and less true to life and hence more formalized, "without," as Mumford says, "once recognizing their ability to reclaim the original truths by comparing the drawing with the actual specimens growing in their gardens."

It is the teacher's responsibility to search out not only the aesthetic, social, and intellectual values, but also the moral values implied in the subject matter of literature; to make the student aware of man's responsibility for the tragic confusion of our time; and to repair the "innocent insensitivity" which lies at the root of our moral confusion.

Refusing to concede the "terribleness" of our time, and warning against the facile generalizations with which commentators and philosophers characterize our epoch, Cook acknowledged the essential limits of the individual's grasp and underscored the consequent necessity for our realization that what meaning and value there is in the universe is what the individual is able to place there by dint of his intelligence, moral will and energy. Our first task is, hence, to break through appearance and illusion—to confront the hard facts of experience with a disciplined response. Encounters in literature brace us for the sudden, swift, and startling onsets of experience; for, in Chekov's words, "Man will only become better when you make him see what he is like." And, more than this, we must acquire and teach self-discipline, which alone can bring man into harmony with himself. We must try to make the individual see, as Frost shrewdly observes, that "every man must learn to contain his own chaos."

"We must keep our covenant with reason," said the speaker. 'What we think and say should be winnowed in the strong winds of rational discussion in the classroom, in the scholarly journal, in meetings like this one."

The intelligent, creative reading of books may stand as our second objective, for by teaching students to read the great writings with sympathy and understanding, we can help them acquire perspective, a historical sense, and the breath of life.

Our third task should be to make very clear that the essence of the humanities consists in an enkindling awareness of the primacy and dignity of the human spirit—to make the student feel that he is a responsible agent, that he belongs to a community of common belief, that he possesses, in Nietsche's phrase, a "civic name." Our fundamental aim is, after all, the cultivation of men—in the words of Miguel Unamuno, "men of flesh and bone, men who are born, suffer, and, although they do not wish to die, die; men who are ends in themselves, not merely means; men who must be themselves and not others; men, in fine, who seek that which we call happiness."

C.N.D.

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Kenneth Burke

Under the chairmanship of Warren Smith (Rhode Island State College), Kenneth Burke (Bennington College), addressing the late afternoon session, attempted to define poetry as "symbolic act." Refusing to see poetry as revelation of inspired truths or as valueless word games, he undertook to distinguish the function of its language from that of the language of science. To use language at all is of course a symbolic act, for language is symbol. But the work of literature presents an action that is symbolic; its action is neither factually true like the language of history, nor does it describe what happens and will happen under given conditions as does the language of science. Physical science using a "vocabularly of motion" is thus a "preparation for action," whereas humanistic learning using a "vocabulary of action" involves the will and motivates action.

Literature in particular presents action which might happen —or symbolic action. Prof. Burke declared that "the analysis of form is the basic thing to do with a work of art" because "the truth of an act consists in the form in which it is presented." And knowledge on the reader's part results from the symbolic quality of the contained action, not from any revelation which the poet may have had. He used the authority of Aristotle by explaining that "imitation" in the *Poetics* is not a process of learning or of knowledge but "the *miming* of an act."

In lyrical poetry, Prof Burke requires that the critic discern "attitudes" which are to be understood as "incipient acts or as substitutes for acts," and he noted that modern poets and their readers are better at taking attitudes than at acting directly.

Prof. Burke distinguished three areas of critical study of a work of literature: the rhetorical aspect, the symbolic aspect, and the logical or grammatical aspect. The rhetorical function of language as an inducer of responses he feels has been neglected but is now rightfully being reclaimed by literary critics in spite of the objections of scociologists. Misuse of the rhetorical function of language, such as that which occurs in magic when words attempt to influence things, occurs in "bad science" when words are used to induce action rather than to describe motion. A poem, however, attempts to induce action or form attitudes, but it cannot succeed unless it is rhetorically sound. It will fail unless it produces not so much a "willing suspension of disbelief" as "an enormous level of belief." Whether we believe in a literal hell or not, we must, in a poem concerning hell, be able to believe that the motives presented are sound.

F.E.S.

Karl Shapiro

The concluding address, (at the evening meeting) by Karl Shapiro (Johns Hopkins), took the form of a symposium having four speakers — two poets, a dramatic critic, and a Hollywood playwright. Although Prof. Shapiro, according to his own introduction, attempted to make these speakers "characters" to a slight degree, his chief aim was to show four types of viewpoint about a common subject. *The Poet in the Theatre.* Or, if each speaker did not actually represent a distinct opinion, he at least expressed one of several literary attitudes operative at the present time. Moreover, each speaker might fairly be said to denote a different phase of the author's own opinion.

Thus, Hackney, the Hollywood dramatist, is not simply the kind of writer who first was a Broadway success and then disappeared into Hollywood; he is also the author's "own worse self." Cannon, the dramatic critic, shows the greatest detachment of the four. The poet Archer is the "by now traditional modernist." The poet S. is Karl Shapiro himself.

The talk begins with a discussion of narrative poetry and proceeds to the verse drama. The greater part of the give-and-take is between Hackney ("who is a bully and does not like S.") and S.

The discursive method of the dialogue form, the author's own identification of all the participants as spokesmen for different phases of his own opinion, the numerous and often subtle apercus struck off by the way, and the irony make digest hard. Several passages uttered by S. himself suggest the central tendency of the discussion:

". . .Our task, as I see it, is to decide whether the best English poetry of our period is to any degree a poetry for drama, a poetry of character, plot or situation. We must also discover whether these qualities are alive or vestigial. If they are alive we can think seriously of progressing toward a theatre, if they are vestigial we must wait for a still deeper death and rebirth. . .

"When I said the best verse plays are also poems I was not trying to state a tautology but to criticize the kind of verse play in which the verse splits away from the play. It is commonplace in poetry that a line is good when it cannot be altered by a syllable: it should be a commonplace in the poetic theatre that a line is immutable both as poetry and as drama. For the two are indissolubly one. Now in every modern verse play I know of, the poetry at some point either leaves the character or the character leaves the poetry. So I think that if poets who are masters cannot conceive the speeches of their characters without this verse-action hiatus, the use of poetry seems to me a doubtful practice. . .

"If we do not present character in the round, even though morally and every way he is completely atomized, he will be incapable of stage life. It happens that the conflict of values is more real to us than the conflict of events: we prefer Hamlet to Macbeth. The Broadway dramatist deals with essentially unmotivated action and conflict and we reject this as simple or dishonest drama: our poets when they write plays deal with deeply motivated impulses that fail to result in significant action. Perhaps we over-estimate the complexity of motivation and underestimate the simplicity of action; I am not sure. But somehow we must give our deeply motivated characters permission to act by ritualizing their conflicts to the point where eventfulness is possible. I think, though, that in approaching psychological action we shall find ourselves abandoning poetry, like Ibsen and Strindberg, and turning to the poetry of prose.

"The action shall be the device for convincing the audience that what one is seeing is really a play, not a dance of words and not a slice of life. A purely lyrical theatre is beside the point as is the picture frame theatre. The choice is not between animated lyric poetry and theatre of low action and vile prose. Now you ask what characters in a verse theatre will speak verse. I can only say we must search for characters who are capable of speaking it.

". . .But the discovery of our characters presupposes what I must lamely call a poetic interest in character. This in turn presupposes a theory of tragedy and comedy. . .Further, the dramatist cannot move his characters unless he finds a place to stand.

". . .Certain of the best novelists of our age. . .Lawrence, Joyce, and Henry Miller, have brought narrative to the point where it is sometimes indistinguishable from poetry. Even technically. And it is a commonplace that the best poets write their best poetry in a medium that is often indistinguishable from prose, even technically. I think, in short, that poetry and narrative are trying to meet. And that if other conditions are favorable, a poetic drama is bound to result."

M.H.G.

I wish to express my gratitude to the following people who assisted me in preparing this report of the New England Spring Meeting:

Kenneth W. Cameron, Trinity College; Francis E. Smith, Colby College; Cornelia Dorgan, Mount Holyoke College; H. Leland Varley, William G. O'Donnell, and Maxwell H. Goldberg, University of Massachusetts.

Charles N. DuBois
University of Massachusetts

The Editor wishes to report the many expressions of appreciation which have come to him for the hard work of the committee which planned this meeting, and particularly for that of the Chair-

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man, Max Goldberg. Kenneth W. Cameron's report of the Program on American Civilization will appear later.

Comparative Literature

The first number of *Comparative Literature* has been distributed to subscribers. It addresses itself to all students of literature, and particularly to those interested in the study of the interrelationships of the various literatures. Original articles, list of publications received, reviews. Editor: Chandler B. Beall, Univ. of Oregon; Associate Editor: Werner P. Friederich, Univ. of N. C. Board: Helmut Hatzfield, Catholic Univ., Victor Lange, Cornell, Harry Levin, Harvard, Austin Warren, Michigan, Rene Welleck, Yale. Published quarterly Univ. of Oregon, Eugene, $3.50

Ideas, Not Grammar

(Excerpts from a letter, Mr. Leary to Miss Watts)

Dear Miss Watts:

I am impressed by the undeniable facts that most products of our secondary school: 1) do not know how to write clearly, intelligently, or correctly; 2) have been exposed to from one to four years of grammar; 3) "hate English." It is self evident that the last difficulty must be attacked first. I know of no other way to stimulate interest in English (or any other subject) except to get students excited about ideas. It is my experience that ideas which excite students do not include ideas about grammar no matter how artfully presented. Ideas about personal and social problems of universal relevance on the other hand, excite almost all students. It is not difficult to get a student so stimulated to set down his reactions to these ideas on paper. It is then that he discovers certain deficiencies which prevent his clearly communicating his reactions. And it is only then that he is prepared to do anything about removing these deficiencies.

Perhaps you are here exclaiming, "Of course. It is precisely here that grammar comes in." But I do not concede that. First I think you will admit that as a matter of fact most dyed-in-the-wool grammarians are impatient with and unskillful in using this idea approach. They are haunted by the lack of time. So they scrap the ideas in order to get back to something "concrete," presumably grammar. Of course. they deny this, for they insist that any written matter—even the synthetic sentences found in their cherished exercises—is an expression of ideas. This is a frivolous rationalization. Naturally, by employing the loosest possible definition of ideas, they can persuade themselves that such sentences as the ones about the man with the cane striking the boy contain ideas. The fact remains that the students, who quite properly regard these as a soporific, do not think so.

"But," you might well ask, "aren't you, too, haunted by time? what do you scrap, grammar? And, if so, how can you pretend that you are teaching your students to write more clearly, intelligently, and correctly?"

My students do learn to write more clearly and intelligently *when they are compelled—by their own interest in the problems posed—to examine carefully what they are saying.* They do not do so if and when their interest has not been aroused—any more than they do so in the traditional composition course. The critical difference, I make bold to say, is that in the traditional composition course their interest is not aroused most of the time; in the "ideas course" their interest is aroused most of the time.

My students write with only moderate correctness, and their improvement in this respect is very modest. But I honestly feel that their improvement even here is measurably greater than it is when they are exposed to the traditional methods (by which I mean, once again, the grammar approach, however defined). . . .

And another thing. Why is it that so many English teachers—people whose ability to read and write is presumably above average—confess that they learned all the grammar they know *after* they began to teach?

William G. Leary

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Bulletin Board

Correction

Functional Semantics, by Joseph G. Brin, is just off the press. It is a *Limited* TUDOR *Edition.* Natl. Press Corp., Boston 14.

New Mexico Quarterly Review

Joaquin Ortega is the new editor of the *New Mexico Quarterly Review,* now in its nineteenth year and recently reorganized. $2.00 a year; Univ. of New Mexico, Alberquerque.

Kenneth W. Cameron, Trinity College, is on leave for research on Emerson, 1949-50. Maynard Savin has been appointed Instructor at Trinity during Professor Cameron's absence.

Ill-Natured

It is impossible to let pass without comment Ludwig Lewisohn's ill-natured criticism, in the last Chap Book, of the late Franz Boas. Eloquent as they are of the bias of many "literary" minds, Mr. Lewisohn's remarks ill become a self-proclaimed apostle of Goethe, whose humanism made him a pioneer in the scientific world of his time. To be impatient of the results of anthropological study seems more appropriate for the fundamentalist of the Bible Belt than for a disciple of the poet who wrote the *Prolog im Himmel.*

No well informed student of philology (which, nota bene, includes literary study) can fail to honor Franz Boas for broadening our understanding of language and languages. Whatever we may think of his personal philosophy of life, we must respect his contributions to the field of linguistics. And since language is the basic human creation, it may well be that the works of men like Boas, Malinowski, and Cassirer, to mention only a few, are as generally humanistic as the labors of "men of letters" who wilfully blind themselves to scientific truth.

Leo L. Rockwell
Colgate University

Of Revenge and Medea

An effective way to survey the problem of revenge in human relationships from literary specimens of widely separated centuries is to use Decca's reccent reordings of MEDEA with Bacon's essay OF REVENGE. The results of this audio-aid, as observed in three divisions of freshman literature, justified the experiment.

Before coming to class the students read the essay and listed the arguments for and against seeking revenge in the style of Bacon's antitheta. Fifteen minutes of the fifty minute class period were spent in supplying historical background to the MEDEA and the remainder to hearing Judith Anderson's dynamic rendering of the Robinson Jeffers adaptation of Euripides' tragedy. Mimeographed copies of the spoken lines were supplied each hearer.

Students were then assigned to write their reactions to the play and part of the next class was devoted to a discussion of revenge which aimed at a synthesis of the concepts held in Euripides' and Bacon's day with the present.

Here are a few of the student's reactions: "Revenge is not helpful to the peace of mind that is required for healthful and happy living", "However much it may have ambitioned to correct injustice, revenge nearly always results in two evils where only one existed before", "If I had any attraction for revenge before, certainly the case of Medea has convinced me that Bacon is right in calling revenge 'a wild justice, which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out'."

Marius Risley,
University of Buffalo

Latin America Lit

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